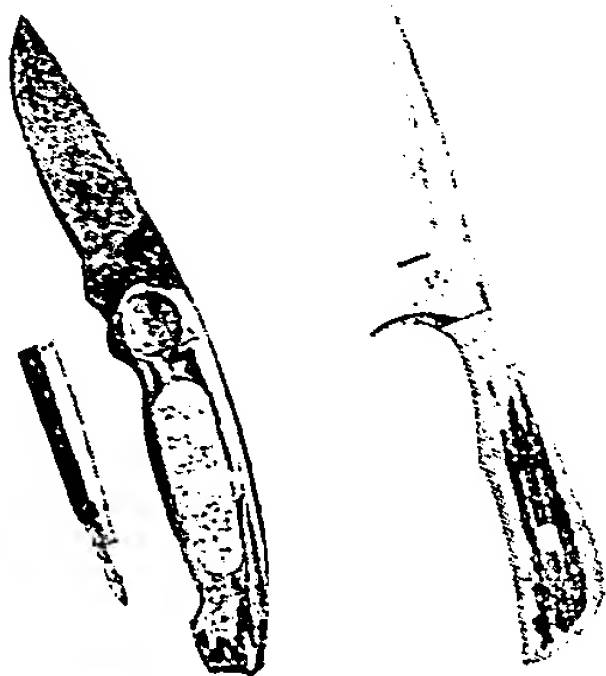


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reasons. First, safety would depend upon the diligence and good judgment of the user to keep the screw in perfect adjustment to resist the temptation to leave it so loose as to become a fast and dangerous gravity knife. The second reason was that an adjustable pivot-pin screw by definition means a loose screw that cannot be completely tightened, which I believe undermines the structural integrity of the entire assembly.

To solve the problem, I devised a spring-loaded drag pin located under the large button head of one of the pivot-pin screws that applied constant pressure to the blade tang to slow it down. This worked just fine but presented yet another problem.

To initiate closing, the deadbolt could be pulled rearward but the blade, being held by the drag pin, would not fall. This made one-hand closing difficult because while holding back on the deadbolt with the thumb and index finger, the index finger would have to reach forward and nudge the blade downward. The level of dexterity required to perform this feat with one hand was unacceptable.

To remedy the problem, I cut a relief pocket into the side of the blade tang so

that the drag pin would not engage the tang until the blade fell from full open to a point beyond the grab step, which would allow the release of the deadbolt. The whole hand could then be deployed in closing. This worked very well and I was beginning to feel as if I had actually accomplished something—but that feeling did not last long.

"The deadbolt provides for automatic compensations for wear."

—the author

Doggone It!

The bad news came when I was browsing through a sporting goods store and spotted a Gerber Bolt-Action folder. When I looked closely at the mechanism, I realized the principle was very much like the design I had been calling my own. I looked up the original patent by the inventor, Blackie Collins, who later conveyed the rights to Gerber. After studying the claims, I came to the conclusion that my idea was not really new at all except for the drag pin and the ambidex-

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Gary Kelley *BLADE Magazine*, June 1992

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